

the condition of education 2005



INDICATOR 24

High School Exit Examinations

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2005*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2005*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.sap?pubid=2005094>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

Suggested Citation:

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *The Condition of Education 2005*, NCES 2005-094, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Coursetaking and Standards

High School Exit Examinations

Students in 20 states, accounting for more than half of all public school students in the United States, are required to pass exit examinations in order to graduate from high school.

Standards-based reform has expanded since the 1990s, and the number of states with tests that students must pass in order to graduate high school has grown (Chudowsky et al. 2002). To date, more than half of all public school students currently live in states with exit examination requirements (Gayler et al. 2004). This indicator examines the extent to which exit examinations are required in the United States, the types of exams being administered, and the initial passing rates.

In 2004, 20 states had exit examinations. Of these states, 7 had minimum competency examinations, 10 had standards-based examinations, and 3 had end-of-course examinations (see supplemental tables 24-1 and 24-2). Five additional states—Arizona, California, Idaho, Utah, and Washington—will be phasing in exit examinations between 2004 and 2008. Of these five states, only Utah will institute a minimum competency examination. The other four will institute standards-based examinations, a change that is consistent with a general trend away from minimum competency examinations.¹

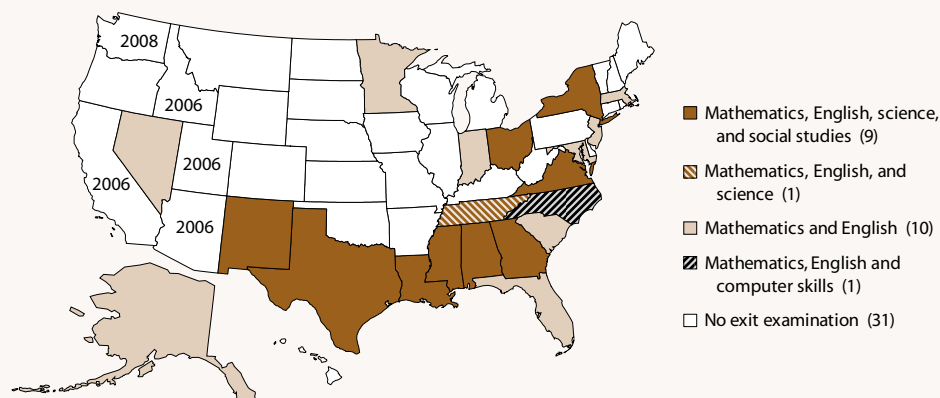
By 2009, of the 25 states with exit examinations in place, all but 6—Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, and Utah—will

use these examinations to meet the accountability requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.²

All 20 of the states with mandatory exit examinations in 2004 tested both English/language arts and mathematics ability. Ten states also tested science knowledge, and 9 of these 10 states also tested social studies knowledge. All 20 states included multiple-choice questions on their examinations, though only Alabama used these questions exclusively. The other states included various types of extended responses, the most common of which asked students to compose a written response.

The percentage of students who passed their exit examinations on their first try ranged from 36 percent in Arizona to 91 percent in Georgia in mathematics, and from 40 percent in Maryland to 95 percent in Georgia in English/language arts (see supplemental tables 24-3 and 24-4). Although the percentage of students who passed exit examinations varied greatly by race/ethnicity across states, Asian and White students were more likely to pass their mathematics and English/language arts exit examinations on their first try than Black or Hispanic students.

EXIT EXAMINATIONS: States with mandatory exit examinations, by subject, and states phasing in exit examinations, by date: 2004



¹ Gayler et al. 2004, figure 2.

² Gayler et al. 2004, table 15.

NOTE: States labeled with years are scheduled to institute exit examinations in the year shown.

SOURCE: Gayler, K., Chudowsky, N., Hamilton, M., Kober, N., and Yeager, M. (2004). *State High School Exit Exams: A Maturing Reform*, adapted from tables 3 and 15, figures 2, 3, and 4, and page 217. Data from state departments of education, July 2004.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Tables 24-1, 24-2, 24-3, 24-4

Chudowsky et al. 2002

Gayler et al. 2004



High School Exit Examinations

Table 24-1. States with mandatory exit examinations, by subjects tested: 2004

State	English/ language arts	Mathematics	Science	Social studies	Computer skills
Total	20	20	10	9	1
Alabama	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Alaska	✓	✓			
Florida	✓	✓			
Georgia	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Indiana	✓	✓			
Louisiana	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Maryland	✓	✓			
Massachusetts	✓	✓			
Minnesota	✓	✓			
Mississippi	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nevada	✓	✓			
New Jersey	✓	✓			
New Mexico	✓	✓	✓	✓	
New York	✓	✓	✓	✓	
North Carolina	✓	✓			✓
Ohio	✓	✓	✓	✓	
South Carolina	✓	✓			
Tennessee	✓	✓	✓		
Texas	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓	

SOURCE: Gayler, K., Chudowsky, N., Hamilton, M., Kober, N., and Yeager, M. (2004). *State High School Exit Exams: A Maturing Reform*, adapted from figure 3. Data from state departments of education, July 2004.

High School Exit Examinations

Table 24-2. Initial grade level tested for exit examinations, by type of examination, type of question in exit examination, and state: 2004

State	Type of examination				Type of question			
	Initial grade tested	Minimum competency	Standards-based	End-of-course	Multiple-choice	Extended-response		
						Short written answer	Writing prompt	Other
Total	†	7	10	3	20	9	17	6
Alabama	11		✓		✓			
Alaska	10	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Florida	10		✓		✓	✓		✓
Georgia	11		✓		✓		✓	
Indiana	10		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Louisiana	10, 11		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Maryland	Varies	✓			✓		✓	
Massachusetts	10		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Minnesota	8, 10	✓			✓		✓	
Mississippi	Varies			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nevada	10		✓		✓		✓	
New Jersey	11		✓		✓	✓	✓	
New Mexico	10	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
New York	Varies			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
North Carolina	8, 9		✓		✓			✓
Ohio	10	✓			✓		✓	
South Carolina	10	✓			✓		✓	
Tennessee	Varies	✓			✓		✓	
Texas	11		✓		✓		✓	
Virginia	Varies			✓	✓		✓	

† Not applicable.

NOTE: State exit examinations and all of their components are established by the state and vary greatly. Initial grade tested refers to the earliest grade in which the student can take the exit examinations. Those states denoted as "Varies" reported that the initial grade level tested varies within the state. End-of-course examinations are taken to meet curriculum standards; minimum competency examinations assess baseline knowledge; and standards-based examinations are aligned with the requirements of a particular grade level. Multiple-choice questions ask students to identify one or more correct answers from a list of possible responses. Extended-response questions are open-ended questions that allow students to provide detailed written answers to questions. The length of a written response may vary from a short phrase or list to a multipage composition written to respond to a specific writing prompt. "Other" refers to types of test questions that are neither short answer nor writing prompt as report.

SOURCE: Gayler, K., Chudowsky, N., Hamilton, M., Kober, N., and Yeager, M. (2004). *State High School Exit Exams: A Maturing Reform*, adapted from figures 2 and 4 and table 7. Data from state departments of education, July 2004.

High School Exit Examinations

Table 24-3. Percentage of students who passed their state's mathematics exit examination on the first try, by race/ethnicity, selected student subgroups, and state: 2004

State	Exit examination subject	Race/ethnicity ¹						English language learners	Students receiving free or reduced-price lunch	Students with disabilities
		All	American Indian	Asian	Black	White	Hispanic			
Alabama	Mathematics	79	82	91	66	86	73	74	68	46
Alaska ²	Mathematics	67	58	68	44	76	53	38	47	23
Arizona	Mathematics	36	14	61	21	49	18	7	—	10
Georgia	Mathematics	91	86	94	78	94	79	68	—	52
Indiana	Mathematics	67	54	85	33	73	46	41	46	27
Louisiana	Mathematics	68	77	87	51	85	68	60	54	23
Maryland	Algebra	53	46	76	28	68	39	—	—	—
Massachusetts	Mathematics	80	65	88	57	86	54	57	—	53
Minnesota	Mathematics	71	43	58	31	78	38	29	47	28
Nevada ³	Mathematics	43	29	53	22	54	25	13	25	6
New Jersey	Mathematics	66	57	83	33	77	42	22	36	22
New Mexico	Mathematics	81	72	94	71	91	76	64	72	43
New York ⁴	Mathematics	83	80	89	65	91	64	61	72	65
North Carolina	Mathematics ⁵	78	66	77	66	87	52	38	—	45
Ohio	Mathematics	68	71	84	38	74	50	—	—	—
Tennessee	Mathematics	75	76	87	52	85	71	60	61	41
Texas ⁶	Mathematics	85	88	95	73	91	78	59	79	55
Virginia	Mathematics	80	77	89	65	85	73	74	69	51
Washington ⁶	Mathematics	39	22	47	14	44	16	8	24	4

— Not available.

¹ Racial and ethnic categories are based on data collected from state departments of education. The groups comprising each race or ethnicity may vary from state to state.

² Alaska's results are preliminary as of May 2004 with district verification still pending.

³ Nevada's data for students with disabilities are only for students with Individualized Education Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and do not include students with disabilities who are served under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁴ New York's pass rate data include some students who met the graduation requirement through alternate tests such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams and some students with disabilities who met the graduation requirement by passing the Regents Competency Tests.

⁵ North Carolina's exit examinations were integrated mathematics and reading.

⁶ Texas and Washington, instead of using free or reduced-price lunch data to identify low-income students, disaggregate data by students' eligibility for Title I.

NOTE: All data are state-reported percentages. North Carolina results are from 2002; Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington results are from 2003; Alaska, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, and Texas results are from 2004. Arizona and Washington will not withhold diplomas until 2006 and 2008, respectively. Pass rates for students on their first try were not available for South Carolina, Florida, and Mississippi. "Mathematics" refers to state examinations that tested quantitative skills.

SOURCE: Gayler, K., Chudowsky, N., Hamilton, M., Kober, N., and Yeager, M. (2004). *State High School Exit Exams: A Maturing Reform*, adapted from table 3 and page 217. Data from state departments of education, July 2004.

High School Exit Examinations

Table 24-4. Percentage of students who passed their state's English/language arts exit examination on the first try, by race/ethnicity, selected student subgroups, and state: 2004

State	Exit examination subject	Race/ethnicity ¹						English language learners	Students receiving free or reduced-price lunch	Students with disabilities
		All	American Indian	Asian	Black	White	Hispanic			
Alabama	Reading	88	90	87	79	93	72	68	80	59
Alaska ²	Reading	70	68	64	58	82	61	29	46	22
Arizona	Reading	59	35	72	44	74	38	13	—	26
Georgia	English language ability	95	94	90	89	97	79	61	—	69
Indiana	English language ability	69	57	78	39	75	44	27	48	22
Louisiana	Reading	71	80	77	55	87	69	47	57	18
Maryland	English	40	26	59	20	52	29	—	—	—
Massachusetts	English language ability	89	80	88	76	94	66	42	—	70
Minnesota	Reading	81	56	63	50	87	52	36	61	40
Nevada ³	Reading	77	72	81	62	86	62	34	60	30
New Jersey	Language arts	80	74	87	61	88	63	18	57	35
New Mexico	Reading	89	81	93	86	96	87	75	83	60
New York ⁴	English	85	79	86	72	91	69	55	76	61
North Carolina	Reading ⁵	78	66	77	66	87	52	38	—	45
Ohio	Reading	79	76	84	58	83	63	—	—	—
Tennessee	Language arts	87	83	90	78	90	83	55	77	43
Texas ⁶	English language ability	87	89	91	82	92	81	42	82	56
Virginia	English	92	92	94	86	95	88	79	86	70
Washington ⁶	English language ability	60	43	64	37	65	35	12	43	12

— Not available.

¹ Racial and ethnic categories are based on data collected from state departments of education. The groups comprising each race or ethnicity may vary from state to state.

² Alaska's results are preliminary as of May 2004 with district verification still pending.

³ Nevada's data for students with disabilities are only for students with Individualized Education Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and do not include students with disabilities who are served under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁴ New York's pass rate data include some students who met the graduation requirement through alternate tests such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams and some students with disabilities who met the graduation requirement by passing the Regents Competency Tests.

⁵ North Carolina's exit examinations were integrated mathematics and reading.

⁶ Texas and Washington, instead of using free or reduced-price lunch data to identify low-income students, disaggregate data by students' eligibility for Title I.

NOTE: All data are state-reported percentages. North Carolina results are from 2002; Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington results are from 2003; Alaska, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, and Texas results are from 2004. Arizona and Washington will not withhold diplomas until 2006 and 2008, respectively. Pass rates for students on their first try were not available for South Carolina, Florida, and Mississippi. "English/language arts" refers to state examinations categorized as reading, English language ability, language arts, or English.

SOURCE: Gayler, K., Chudowsky, N., Hamilton, M., Kober, N., and Yeager, M. (2004). *State High School Exit Exams: A Maturing Reform*, adapted from table 3 and page 217. Data from state departments of education, July 2004.